



The FRASERS, by MacLise. William Maginn (head of table) surrounded by contributors to his intemperate *Fraser's Magazine*. Carlyle called the periodical "a chaotic, fermenting dung-hill heap of compost".

JOHN GROSS: *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters. Aspects of English Literary Life since 1800.* 322pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £3.3s.

ALEXANDER MACMILLAN was pregnant with a multiple birth of literary biographies. The midwife was to be John Murley. How to name the progeny? Short Books on English Authors? Masters of Literature? "I am more and more averse," wrote Murley, "to 'Men of Letters.' To call Bunyun or Burns--to say nothing of Shakespeare or Bacon--by that title is not good." To which Macmillan replied: "Carlyle applies it in his *Hero-Worship*." Macmillan hero-worshipped his great companion---to Johnson, Rousseau, AND BURNS." So Carlyle, "or whom the man of letters was "our most important modern person", "good fairy-godfather, good or bad, to be nineteenth century's most influential series of short books on British Masters of literature. Two genera- tions at least were brought up on Macmillan's *English Men of Letters* without stopping to think about the aptness of the baptismal name. It has been left to a later generation, in the person of Mr. John Gross, to set us thinking.

et us thinking—
What Englishman today would
celebrate his profession as "man of
letters"? Yet *homme de lettres*
would not look pretentious in a
Frenchman's passport or on
his *déclaration de l'impôt sur*
revenu. What English writer
would, without whimsicality or
affectation, address an older
writer by the English equivalent of
Cher maître?—as indeed, in French
and in English, the Polish Joseph
Conrad was wont to address the

American Henry James. For all we have a Royal Academy of (visual) Arts, and a British Academy devoted to the moral and political sciences, we either do not take ourselves seriously enough as a nation of scribblers, or we are too modest, or too self-conscious, to set up anything as pontifical as an equivalent of the Académie française. A step in this direction was taken half a century ago, largely at the instigation of that *homme-de-lettres pur excellence*, Edmund Gosse, with the formation of an "academic committee" within the Royal Society of Literature. Like Robert Bridges's Society for Pure English a few years later, this was altogether too un-English an activity to last long.

Yet the designation "man of letters" has, or has had, its uses. Mr. Gross applies it, not to Shakespeare or Burns or to any creative

writer as such, but to critics and essayists, belletrists and literateurs, expositors and dons. Such men existed before 1800, where this book begins, but there is some logic in beginning where the rise on the graph was nearing the top and tracing the descent to our own day. There are two decents, that of the respectability of the designation itself, and that which records the decay of a culture. Mr. Cross's avowed concern in this book is "with the shaping of nineteenth-century literary culture and with its gradual disintegration." The graph starts with Francis Jeffrey and the *Edinburgh Review* and ends with Dr. Leavis and *Scrutiny*. It starts with one kind of high-level journalism, and ends with another.

"Journalism is a career", writes Mr. Gross; "literature is, or ought to be, a vocation." This is a matter of definition. "The main reason why a

satisfactory history of journalism will never be written is that journalism itself is such an elastic term." What Mr. Cross has attempted is a history of that elastic character, the man of letters, who at his best has a foot in both camps: his vocation is not for imaginative literature—though he may also be a Coleridge, a Thackeray, or a Bernard Shaw—but for a form, or forms, of writing which can only reach the public through periodicals of one level or another.

The history is organized in a series of chapters, generally chronological but overlapping, in each of which the tendencies of the period are exemplified in the persons of one or more outstanding characters. The chapters might have been titled in the manner of Carlyle's *Hero-Worship* lectures. First comes the man of letters as gentleman-reviewer, with Jeffrey as hero. The eighteenth-century idea

that to write for money was ungentlemanly died hard. The lord of Abbotsford was reluctantly forced into it: the bard of Newstead became reconciled to it. Jeffrey regarded his twenty-five years of editing the *Edinburgh* as an amateur interlude in the life of a professional politician, advocate and judge.

His influence as editor and critic was none the less forceful for his anonymity—an anonymity that characterized, and was all too often abused by, almost all the great nineteenth-century reviews and magazines. (It has been estimated that 90 per cent of the criticism and fiction in such periodicals in Victoria's reign was anonymous or pseudonymous.) He was the first and, for all his prejudices, the most respected of that lusty regiment of Scotsmen which not only dominated the quarterlies and monthlies—Macvey Napier,

and monthlies—Macvey Napier, "Christopher North," Lookhart, John Scott and David Masson among them—but included, as Mr. Gross points out, the first editors of the serious weeklies, the *Spectator*, *Economist* and *Saturday Review*. Among the exceptions it is pleasant to find Mr. Gross lauding that in many respects most unsatisfactory personality, the arch-Cockney Leigh Hunt, founder of the weekly *Examiner*.

a far more enterprising editor than any of his Tory assailants. A timeless setter-up of periodicals, at one time or another he provided a platform for most of the outstanding anti-establishment poets and critics of the age.

There was nothing of the gentleman reviewer about Leigh Hunt; editing and wringing for money was as much a bread-and-butter affair in Surrey Square as it had been in Gt. St. Street and was to become in Fleet Street.

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letters as prophet, takes Carlyle (another Scot, and *ad generalis*) and Matthew Arnold as exemplars. Mr. Gross has a great deal to say about Carlyle, but not much for him. It is in fact both a strength and a weakness of this history that a great deal is said, and said well, about a small number of famous men of letters, and less is said, in too small a space, about others who, though their names are not household words, should in the context be recognized as equally significant in the rise and decline of the genre. Carlyle was a towering figure, posthumously judged to have feet of clay. He is shown up by Mr. Gross, not without reservations, as a man worth remembering only for his letters and his overtly autobiographical writings, and one whose prophetic books—his lectures, his essays, his histories—with their philistine precepts and ultra-fascist philosophy, are little more than camouflage for covert autobiography, for glorification of the hero as Carlyle. Nevertheless it is admitted that "with all his snarls, no writer of his generation can have done more to raise the whole moral prestige of literature".

By way of Mill, self-styled logician-in-ordinary, who only latterly and grudgingly accepted the "aesthetic" branch of education as annexed to the moral and intellectual branches, we arrive at Arnold, scholar, poet, sage. Mr. Gross records Arnold's sympathy, he withdrew from Carlyle, sympathy grounded in politics and sociology rather than in literature. Arnold looked forward to the welfare, not the service, state. His efforts in the field of education, says Mr. Gross, with justice, are not nearly as well known as they ought to be, adding, more arguently: "I don't know that, even as literature, one would willingly forgo his reports on elementary schools for the sake of another 'Thyrsis'". Arnold, who gave up writing poetry in his forties, was never more than a part-time man of letters.

While Mr. Gross can claim for Carlyle that he raised the moral prestige of literature, he can also approve René Wellek's judgment that "around 1850", the year of *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, "English criticism had reached a nadir". In Chapters III and IV, which treat of the man of letters as higher journalist, we start with the impetus the abolition of the taxes on knowledge gave to a cheap press, the launching of the penny *Daily Telegraph*, the disgust of Arnold that a newspaper should boast the biggest circulation in the world. The 1850s and 1860s witnessed a vastly wider spread of more-or-less serious journals and more-or-less higher journalists. The first group of heroes comprises G. H. Lewes, Bagehot and Leslie Stephen. The portrait, more accurately the anatomizing, of Stephen is one of the best short essays in the book. Mr. Gross sums up this too often forgotten man:

A little more personal resonance, one feels, a higher degree of social involvement, and his criticism might have ranked beside Arnold's. As it is, he played safe; he is the Gentleman in the library, content not to ask too many embarrassing questions. This sets a definite limit on his value to posterity. Unlike Arnold, he never seems an indi-



Virginia and Sir Leslie Stephen in 1903.

pensable critic—except, that is, in the sense of there being no finer example of his type available. Without him, we should scarcely have guessed quite how formidable a Gentleman in a library could be.

"A higher degree of social involvement..." This is one criterion by which men of letters are being judged, and by which many of them, heroes and anti-heroes alike, are found wanting. The second group of higher journalists, classed as "Liberal Practitioners"—John Morley, Frederick Harrison, Augustine Birrell, Herbert Paul—pass at least that test.

Not so men of letters as "bookmen"—another appellation that time has debased—who held sway over a wide public for half a century from the early 1870s. Saintsbury and Henley were indeed committed, but to the Tory side; the rest began as purveyors of *vers-de-soix*, and ended as elegant essayists and armchair critics, or were done turned journalists or journalists turned dons. The principal anti-heroes this time are Andrew Lang and Edmund Gosse, and little use has Mr. Gross for either. For Lang he reserves his sharpest barbs:

Lang was "the droopy aristocrat of letters... much approved of by the tweedier sort of schoolmasters and dons, especially on account of the learned levity with which he celebrated the pleasures of cricket and angling and golf".

And for serious criticism? For Lang, says Mr. Gross, "Milton was literature, and so was Stanley J. Weyman"—or Rider Haggard and Anthony Hope. His enthusiasm for, and puffing of, "the straightforward tuppence-coloured adventure story", "the trashiest melodrama... pro-

vided it had its quota of swash-buckling", is set against the ridicule and disparagement he consistently meted out to "practically every truly important novel which came his way", to Hardy and James, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky and Zola. Can anything, Mr. Gross asks, be saved from the wreck? The answer is, the *Fairy Books*.

All this may seem a little unfair. The fault, if fault there be, lies not so much with Lang as with the age, with an educated public which liked its escape-literature well written. Lang till he was nearly seventy and Gosse till he was nearly eighty were both assured of a forum for their causeries, which they would not have been if editors and press barons had not known that their clientele liked it. Mr. Gross should blame the public. Indeed by his jibe against twaddling schoolmasters he seems to say so. Yet may not a schoolmaster who appreciates *Creeping John* also enjoy *King Solomon's Mines*?

While Lang was dishing out learned levity to the average educated man, two other influences were at work. In a chapter happily titled "Early English" we are introduced to the beginnings of "Eng. Lit." as an academic discipline (in Oxford not until the 1890s, though Anglo-Saxon had been taught there since the eighteenth century), and so to the seeds of academic literary criticism as we know it today—to Furnivall and Henry Morley, Churton Collins and Raleigh and Quiller-Couch. Of none of these, except perhaps Morley, a man with a mission, does Mr. Gross fully approve, though he pays tributes to Raleigh and Quiller-Couch as ambassadors of letters no less than heads of, by modern standards, unprofessionalized departments.

The other new influence—and here again Morley, as *vulgus*, plays a part—was the cashing-in by spy publishers and hired men of letters on the hunger for learning of the newly literate, the products of W. E. Forster's Education Act, Forster, incidentally, rates mention by Mr. Gross for the repressive Irish Coercion Act of 1881, but not for the enlightened

Education Act of 1870. Incidentally, also, Mr. Gross's side-swipe at the Oxford University Press for the "agreeable anomaly" of the title *The World's Classics*—a series including insular non-classics—is misdirected; the title was not of the Press's coming.

The World's Classics was neither the first, nor at first among the more successful, of the cheap series to bring literary works however "classical" may be defined within the purchasing power of the new readers. This area has been well charted, from the viewpoint of reader and publisher, by the American scholar Dr. Richard D. Altick. Mr. Gross's contribution is to view the scene through the eyes of the men of good will who promoted vulgarization, and the men of letters who edited reprint series, or provided brief and often superficial introductions to individual volumes, or wrote elementary histories of English or world literature. Some were scholars, some hacks. (Morley could at times be as superficial a hack as any of them.) The benefit of the popularization of literature in the late nineteenth century is well attested by readers of humble origins who rose to eminence in other than literary fields. If Mr. Gross had acknowledged this fact he might have been less harsh towards Sir John Lubbock's "crash-course" of *The Hundred Best Books*.

Any reader capable of profiting from [such lists] is *ipso facto* perfectly capable of compiling a list of his own, and also of recognizing how preposterous the whole idea is, except as a parlour game.

It does not seem to have occurred to Mr. Gross that one must begin by reading some best books before one is capable of whittling world literature down to one hundred titles, or that some humble souls can profit by crash-courses.

A brief chapter on the Edwardians leads to "Modern Times" and to "Cross-Currents of the Thirties". It is only at this point that Mr. Gross shows his true colours. It is now that he begins to distinguish clearly between the academic and the non-academic critic, and between the academic critic who, in his view, is to be trusted and his fellow who, by the same token, is not to be trusted. There are some excellent pen-portraits in these chapters—of Chesterton, Squire, Desmond MacCarthy, Middleton Murry—and delights on the periodical, with which they were associated. The most understanding is a long appreciation of T. S. Eliot. That his political views—"the occasional tenderness shown towards Nazism"—are repugnant does not blind Mr. Gross to his virtues as a critic of literature and an influence for the good.

The last of the anti-heroes is the academic critic who is not to be trusted. Mr. Gross's analysis of what he sees as the arbitrary judgments, illogicalities and self-deceptions of Dr. Leavis is strong stuff. A "Leavisite" might regard it as prejudiced, but he should recognize it as more cogently reasoned than attacks by those who have allowed judgment to be obscured by what they see as arrogance, dogmatism and a self-justifying martyrdom. The sixteen pages devoted to Leavis end with a

passage that reveals one of Mr. Gross's weaknesses for the future. One can only feel very different about a critic who wrote not a university, but a potential influence on the education of the world. After all there have been critics with strong views who have not been so far more bigoted, but at least had a better critical equipment and a better training. Mr. Gross's analysis of Leavis's training, but I doubt whether any Victorian critic would have been so managed to reproduce in our own time, and to someone more competent to leave in intellectual status, opposing, say, Geoffrey Gorer, had been able to infer his views on generations of freshmen. . . . What seems certain is that any future critical *chop-chose* will be more likely than ever to be an academic.

Here, still virtually in the 1930s, the book ends, except for an epilogue voicing Mr. Gross's second foreboding. He dies away from "The Two Cultures" episode, but sees literary appreciation, indeed literature itself, passing through perilous straits. On one side is the Scylla of the Other Culture becoming potential humanists into the physical, and also the social, sciences. On the other side, the Charibdis of the mass media lures potential readers to the scenes of the cinema and the TV set. Against such hazards "the literary tradition quite simply needs the protection of the universities. But it would be a sad day if it ever came to be potholed identified with them."

Who, finally, is this Mr. Gross? We learn from the book-jacket, if we did not know before, that he was a publisher before he became a Cambridge don, and that he is now a freelance writer. The *humble-dilettante de nos jours*. While there is an historian's thorough, a critic at once soaring and so provocative, a writer with so acute a command of English prose, we need not despair lest the discipline of Dr. Leavis and the Other Culture of Lord Snow have exterminated the same. This is no back-handed compliment.

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The wrong members in control

DORIS LESSING: *The Four-Gated City*. Volume Five of *Children of Violence*. 712pp. Rupert Hart-Davis. £2 5s.

What future could one have predicted for Martha Quest? It is now seventeen years since Mrs. Lessing presented the world with this intrepid, unhappy, argumentative young woman, in whom so many readers—to the author's pleasure—have seen themselves, and so many critics to the author's rage—have seen the author. The fifth and final volume of her life story—700 pages long—concludes one of the most ambitious projects of modern fiction. Such ambition, incidentally, is distinctly unmodern. In a picky author's note, Mrs. Lessing remarks:

This book is what the Germans call a *Bildungsroman*. This kind of novel has been out of fashion for some time, which does not mean that there is anything wrong with this kind of novel.

No, really? But a *Bildungsroman* implies some personal moral resolution, some answer to the questions asked or exemplified by the central, finally *gebildet*, figure. Whatever happened to the uneducated intellectual of *Martha Quest*, to the unwelcome wife of *A Proper Marriage*, to the small-town Marxist of *A Ripple from the Storm*? *The Four-Gated City* tells us, in a biographical sense. But that is very much the least of its themes.

Biographically, then, Martha comes to England at the end of the Forties, and takes a job as housekeeper and secretary to Mark Coldridge, an English writer. The novel does both her and the novel nothing but good. Her anger had been too long and too narrowly directed at colonial society, just as some books may lead one to complain not always unjustly—that everything would be solved by an extra ten pounds a week, so Martha's experiences looked more and more like, not a report on the human race, but a request for a ticket to London. It is the essence of provincialism to find one's own sufferings simply too boring to speak about. After all the books have been written, all the arguments won by others elsewhere, must one still put up with interfering mothers or reactionary neighbours? Poor Chekhov, who described this condition as well as anyone could—some things do get better when one moves to Moscow.

Martha herself, for one, Age helps as well as environment. Since her meeting with Thomas in *Landlocked*, Martha is a nicer as well as a more interesting woman—kinder, wiser, less self-absorbed. A better heroine does not necessarily make a better book. But Martha's unacknowledged moral limitations were always an irritant in a book which moved so rapidly between Martha's opinions or experiences and the author's editorial interventions—which invited, in fact, just the response Martha made to her own reading:

She was left unmoved by criticisms of the sort of person she was by parents, relations, preachers, teachers, politicians and the people who write for the news-

papers; whereas an unsympathetic description of a character similar to her own in a novel would send her into a condition of anxious, soul-searching for days. Which suggests that it is of no use for artists to insist, with such nervous disclaimers for responsibility, that their productions are only "a device" or "a reflection from the creative fires of irony," etc., etc., while the Marthas of this world read and satch with the craving thought, What does this say about my life?

What *The Four-Gated City* says about Martha's life is that it ceases to be the centre of her attention. Her employer's family and her troubles become her world, her marriage, her career. Cooking, cleaning, coping, advising, organizing, mothering a home adopted tribe in the large Bloomsbury house occupy twenty years of her life, and all of this book. This is not a snug Preudian harbour (forget silly politics, fructify a minor role). In case anyone should think Mrs. Lessing is succumbing to soft "solutionism", the book ends with the destruction of most of the present advanced industrial world. It is precisely for this reason that Martha's own biography ceases to be a wide enough canvas for her creator's purpose. This is not a biography (not a *Bildungsroman*) but a work of social pathology.

Its "feminist" focus, productive of so much hot air and hot temper, is therefore less sharp. True, Martha becomes Mark's mistress; but the affair depends on his need this wife being usually either in or on the edge of a breakdown and her affection rather than on any blazing passion. True, she acquires an extraordinary lover, a dedicated sexual expert; but he can be abandoned for convenience's sake. When Martha briefly returns to him, to discover that his knowledge has degenerated into technique, his virility into sadism—he breaks girls in for a brother she feels more sorrow than anger, and not much of either, she settles with remarkable docility into the sexual as well as the social role of a friendly, helpful, unattached middle-aged woman.

In a recent essay on women in literature, Mary Ellman has criticized the earlier volumes of the series:

It is not of course, Doris Lessing's fault that the book has fabricated what she attempted genuinely, that intervention can be (and has been) vulgarised as easily as, say, sexuality in the novel. And *Children of Violence* retains its own quality of implacable, even heroic, thoroughness. But still, its whole intention seems to have driven the writer towards the dulling of her own talent...

The implacable and heroic thoroughness remains; but one cannot complain of this volume that "having rejected the dramatic argument of *Middlemarch*, the woman novelist remains nonetheless under a compulsion to answer or at least mull over the same oppressive questions."

Nothing is here for *Nora*, thank God. Some continuities remain. It is one thing to grow tired of an argument; another to kill off a character. Martha's mother, for example, visits her in London, tries to run her life for the last fatal time, quarrels with her finally and returns to a

casually mentioned death in Africa. The forty-five pages which wind up this life of totally wasted sacrifice are as painful, as dryly passionate, as anything Mrs. Lessing has done. The Marthas, again, put in a last appearance, puzzled and powerless in a London restaurant. But here the irony is too obvious, the sense of a final curtain-call too oppressive. There are pitfalls in the sheer technical fun of winding up what has been (in the blurbs' affectation of craft) "on the workbench" for twenty years.

In general, the Coldridge family hog the stage. They are a magnificent, almost Tolstoyan creation. Like the Matthews family in *No Laughing Matter*—a book comparable in scale and seriousness to *The Four-Gated City*—the Coldridges are English society which is one of the things wrong with it. ("A family with the wrong members in control.") More consciously than any of the Matthews family except Quentin, the Coldridges work at reform. Mark's brother Arthur and Arthur's ex-wife Phoebe are left-wing Labour M.P.s. His brother Colin, a Cambridge physicist, defects to Russia almost as soon as Martha arrives; the first in a chain of catastrophes which bind her to a permanent place in their household. But reform and consolidation, in a peculiarly English way, go hand in hand. Mark's son Francis and his nephew Paul inherit, as of right, the swarming London of the Streets; a bit of writing, work on the edge of film and television, a half share in a boutique. They make money without effort, achieve success without careers. Mark's mother gives parties where everyone tithes along as happily as ever, falsely believing that they are living through unprecedentedly radical times. "In the old days when I gave an election party I had to be careful to keep the left and the right apart—now it's the left and the left." Herzen said of some Russian radicals: "They are not the doctors, they are the disease." The Coldridges are both.

As a description of the disease, this family group is superb. One of Mrs. Lessing's greatest strengths is her readiness to use old-fashioned methods of direct attack on targets which most writers feel are too vast or too obvious for anything but allegory or indirection. One can still

deduce a good deal of what is happening to a society by plainly transcribing what people eat, wear, and say. It is a pity that Mrs. Lessing writes with an almost willful rejection of ease, that she has—or displays—no sense of humour at all, and that she has been ill-served (as in *Landlocked*) by careless proof-reading. (One page offers both Senator Joe McCarthy and *Food of Food's Hall*.) But it is not of great importance. What is important is the diagnosis which she includes with the description. Her final catastrophe (which might be nuclear war or accidental pollution) is not a hypothesis or an archetype, but a prophecy. Her views on madness and extra-sensory perception, with which the book deals at great length, are not a literary device but an actual argument. It is difficult to accept the book but reject the views; but that is what most readers are likely to do.

Mark's wife Lynda is in and out of mental hospitals for hallucinations. She hears voices; she claims they really are people talking to her. Martha comes to hear them too. Without drugs, without blabbing which would expose her to the "creative" blandness of psychiatrists and doctors, she cultivates this faculty. Like a radio-set, she can pick up other people's thoughts; like a Christian mystic, she wrestles with the self-destructive part, the genuinely mad portion, of the space around her. Martha and Lynda and some others find that telepathy leads to prediction; they have four to six months' warning of the final disaster. On the tiny Scottish island where Martha and some others survive it, children are born with greater gifts than theirs. "People like you and me are a sort of experimental model," she writes to Francis Coldridge, administering relief and rehabilitation in Africa to a few white survivors, "and Nature has had enough of us."

Extra-sensory experiences are often called indescribable. In fact she describes them very plainly, and with some skillful defences against the instant reactions which a rationalist society breeds. (The snobbery of dismissing such things as occult mumbo-jumbo, the patronage of ascribing them to middle-aged soft-headedness.) It may be true that only by listening to the "mad" can we save a mad world from self-destruction, that our defences against hysteria (tranquilli-

zers and isolation wards) are in fact defences against reality. If this view starts to hear voices, he has to admit it. Certainly the "hearing" record of many analysts is an argument for treating them with caution. In strong argument about the coarse stereotypes by which Mrs. Lessing puts down such doctors as appear in this book, What does not inspire confidence the tone and quality of her general pronouncements.

Mark Coldridge, like Anna Franman in *The Golden Notebook*, pasts up newspaper cuttings of famine, war, pollution, and general political lunacy. Enough to drive anyone mad, ho. But what is one to make of editorial statements such as "a description of the forty thirteen year as 'a government more corrupt than this country'?" (Baldwin, Balfour Liverpool, North?) What is one to make of Martha's outburst against the crowds of Oxford Street: "Where was or person who was healthy, did not wear glasses, hear ing-aid, false teeth, who slept well who did not take half a dozen kind of drugs, who did not attend doctors' psychiatrists?" A spot check in the house revealed seven out of eleven; the rest either worshipping or were kept awake by musquitos. Hardy Armageddon.) A friend of Lynda's is literally driven mad by the problems of running a house, and keeps memoranda of her difficulties. "Friday evening, Lynda said the tap was dripping. I rang the plumbers. They didn't answer. This in spite of the fact they advertised to ring after six." But later, we are told in all seriousness that the fact that "nothing worked" was a sign of social collapse in the seventies.

An electrician splicing a wire unconsciously "cut it out of a kind of hatred for what it stood for: it soon broke and burned out lives and wiring." Anti-Communism or campaign against homosexuals are recognized in the early pages of this book, for what they are: bourgeois fads. The current cult—blaming machines and machine-minders where one once blamed servants—is taken as a serious sign of the times. It is, quite simply, an opinion this reviewer cannot share. But the book as a whole is an experience he would happily share with anyone.

Revisitation

MALCOLM LOWRY: *Dark as the Grave Wherein My Friend is Laid*. Edited by Douglas Day and Margerie Lowry. 255pp. Cape. 35s.

In early December, 1945, their cabin in Dollarton having burned down 18 months before, Malcolm and Margerie Lowry fled from Vancouver to Mexico City. *Under the Volcano* had been completed, but not yet accepted for publication.

For Margerie Lowry, the Mexican trip was a discovery in fact of places (in Mexico City, Cuernavaca and Oaxaca) with which she had been long familiar in Lowry's masterpiece. She hoped that it would be for her husband the exorcism of the curse that he felt laid on him. For Lowry himself, it was more fearful. The revisitation of the hell which had given him the material for his masterpiece, for the purpose not of liberation but of creative suffering.

The details of that trip are most fully given in the letter to A. Ronald Butler (the *Selected Letters of Malcolm Lowry*, pages 112-12). From it emerged two novels, both unfinished at the time of Lowry's suicide, of which *Dark as the Grave* edited by Professor Douglas Day and Margerie Lowry is the first. It is, as Professor Day observes in his useful and perceptive introduction, "a fragment, a notebook on its way to becoming a novel... Lowry would have needed at least four more years to bring it all together."

The themes was in Lowry's own words, "Under the Volcano", the exploration by Sigbjorn Wilderness (as Lowry here called himself) of a circle closer to the centre of Hell than which the Consul had reached in *Under the Volcano*. And from what is here collected, it is possible to imagine how Lowry would have accomplished this by a process of distillation.

For the most part, however, the book has not reached the stage in which it can stand beside Lowry's masterpiece, the comparable adjunct. Its main interest lies in its relation to *Under the Volcano* itself and its illumination of Lowry's life and methods of composition. The period covers Lowry's receipt of Jonathan Cape's report on *Under the*

Volcano and Lowry's astonishing letter of January 2, 1946, defending and explaining the scope and plan of his great novel; and *Dark as the Grave* will obviously be scrutinized most carefully by the writers of these, for whom Lowry has come as a relief from the inevitable Joyce Joyce. (For these, however, there should be a note of factual warning. Lowry's memory, though precise, was no more accurate than his knowledge of Spanish. For example, his address in the Calle Humboldt Cuernavaca was carefully noted as "number 65, now 55, 52" in his book was in fact number 15, and Laruelle's house, number 24, in which he lodged in 1946 was already let off to lodgings in 1937. Inaccurate precision gave Lowry great satisfaction.)

Valuable as *Dark as the Grave* is for the light which it throws on *Under the Volcano*, it has considerable merits of its own. There are magnificent comic scenes, springing mostly from the character of Sigbjorn Wilderness, the helpless, thirsty, will-less, wanting-to-love-and-be-loved projection of Malcolm Lowry, a very different character from that of Geoffrey Firmin. Fear, horror, menace and doom are never far away—but humour keeps breaking in, as it did in his own life.

Cutting up rough

ALAN BURNS: *Babel*. 159pp. Calder and Boyars. 30s.

Curt, annoyed statements make up this work. There is no story. Some of the statements are meant to be apophthegms. A profundity of solemn doubt is mined. The royal family is a new name for God. The arithmetic country has no leader. There had been an emergency on the recommendation of the Prime Minister. No return to rule is planned. Publicity changed the approach to hydrogen bombs, a softer sell to improve the image. The excitement of attempting to swindle the people came over strongly.

Sentences like these are arranged in paragraphs, together with other sentences less immediately meaningful. Famous names from old newspapers are inserted, but it is not always easy to remember who they were. No doubt the juxtaposition of Bobby Baker and Baby Boko seemed interesting when the book was written. Ted Hill and David Frost must also have been in the news.

In some sections Alan Burns seems to be attempting the "cut-up" technique of William Burroughs, stacking together fragments of unrelated sentences from newspapers. The blurb notes his use of newspaper clichés to "reveal the Babel myth as the tragedy of all attempts to construct a secular Utopia." Alan Burns has been highly praised by Angus Wilson

and has received £2,000 from the Arts Council. There is no real effort to communicate: only a sense of scorn is conveyed—not unlike that of another sceptical critic of "secular Utopias", Donald Consett, the reactionary lecturer in Angus Wilson's *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes*. But Consett made himself clear: "Even increased information which has not been put through the usual worn-out mulling machine may do something to fill up the spiritual vacuum that threatens us." Alan Burns's style is sometimes equally jarring, but less lucid. Occasionally, though, hard sentences emerge which would fit into a play by Edward Bond:

Leans was a rich man surrounded by scholars. God makes jokes against him. He speaks to people with kindness when he has time. He belongs to the public. He cannot be a really bad man.

To convey the full thrust of Alan Burns's paragraphs, a reviewer can do no better than try the "cut-up" technique on his blurb. Thus: "We technique on his blurb. Thus: 'We hug so closely Alan Burns who is a significant development. He is currently living in lowering confusion with his novelist wife, a policeman called Nathan, and their £2,000 Angus Wilson. Writes Award 1969, trenchantly observed. Characterized by the institutional, Calder and Boyars reflect the literary public's small nugget of something reset into patterns which reveal the scintillating facade of a lonely, sick, bored Arts Council."

Biffing the barbarians

MARYA MANNES: *They*. 215pp. Gollancz. 30s.

They are youth, imagined in a near and McLuhanized future, when anyone over fifty can expect to be driven from society, art will be electronic and human intercourse will have been dynamited by technology and racial strife. Speaking for a group of older, most of whom were once artists and are now in their respectable sixties, Marya Mannes's fantasy is intended as a devastating attack on the philistinism of the young today and a defence of "our" values. The defence is a complacent and muddled one, and a covert bid for sympathy and admiration. We too, she tells her faceless audience, were against Vietnam, were free of the grover sexual taboos and abhorred racial prejudice. We were Clean Hippies really, not at all like those suburban parents against whom you so understandably rebelled. We rejected "the constraints of family life, the rat race and the acquisitive society before you were thought of, but we were better than you because we appreciated torn in art and in nature. We lived gracefully, cultivated our minds and our senses and were successful in our work. All this is very smug, and the less acceptable for its exclusion of the enemy. The barbarians are without, and except for a brief prologue and epilogue are nearly made responsible for having chance to rebut their gripping charges.

As a picture of a future without standards, continuity or humanity, which has succumbed to the absurdities of the impersonal in art and life, *They* is silly and disconcerting. It is not a masterpiece, that is why it is not a masterpiece. It is a piece of self-deception, and the 144 pages of these with a smothering and irrefutable life view.

of the 1960s, secure blame for society's breakdown, though the little community's suggestions as to how they would educate and govern are as tyrannically conformist in their own way as any they deride. The vituperation of the group amounts to no more than another sort of philistinism, a bitterness that the young no longer respond to Gershwin and

Brahms and Whitman but to forms of art which Miss Mannes is sure clash with humanity's best instincts. Perhaps the only really dispiriting thing about any generation's youth is the certainty that they will become as devalued and undiscriminating as their elders. There may be other things to deplore, but Miss Mannes has not pointed them out.

Rural rumblings

GORDON M. WILLIAMS: *The Siege of Trencher's Farm*. 220pp. Secker and Warburg. 30s.

In his last novel, *From Scenes Like These*, Mr. Williams showed a rare understanding of his setting, the squalid and declining countryside around a Scottish industrial city. With his move to Dartmoor for *The Siege of Trencher's Farm* he is much less successful in his evocation of place and people: from shrewd and compassionate observation of the social and personal relationships within a community described with much insight, he has turned to a fairly simple—and much cruder—tale of sinister doings in a remote country spot. There is peace and conviction in the telling, but somehow a loss of seriousness. As the tension gathers, a resourceful thriller-writer's skill comes into play.

Trencher's Farm is the house rented by George Magruder, a well-meaning American professor, so that he can finish his study of an eighteenth-century English scholar and take in the ancient ruins. Williams has done, and will do, better things: this accomplished piece

no successful contact with the intractably sullen villagers, who see them as wealthy intruders. When an infamous child murderer, Henry Niles, escapes from the nearby equivalent of Broadmoor, George almost runs him over in a blizzard and carries him home. The siege is a blood-thirsty and drunken attack on the farmhouse by a party of local thugs, whom George miraculously and, with a resource and virility Louise did not expect, successfully fends off—they are after the murderer's blood.

Mr. Williams makes the local barbarism intrinsically convincing: the brutal earthiness of his villagers and the idealistic decency of George, who will fight to the death to protect the miserable Niles, are both believable. The tale is undoubtedly gripping, but leaves an impression that subtler details are being left out in a quest for more narrative excitement. Apart from one splendidly chilling row, the relationship between George and Louise is unconvincing and unexciting. Williams has done, and will do, better things: this accomplished piece

Reconstruction

ISLAY LYONS: *The Lyre and the Lotus*. 318pp. Collins. The Harvill Press. 30s. GRAHAM SHELLEY: *The Knights of Dark Renown*. 283pp. Collins. 25s.

The interaction of east and west has always been a fruitful field for novelists. The second-century passage to India in *The Lyre and the Lotus* is made by a peripatetic Greek sculptor named Aristes, a consumptive genius who, according to Mr. Lyons's hypothesis, was responsible for creating the archetypal image of the Buddha.

It is an intriguing theory and the author's evident knowledge of Buddhist art makes it sound highly plausible. The events leading up to the creation of the masterpiece are plotted with considerable ingenuity, from the departure from Antioch as part of the great straggling army led by the emperor Trajan to set the seal on his conquest of Parthia to the peace of the Buddhist monastery at Rajaghat.

In dealing with these events, Mr. Lyons displays great powers of imaginative reconstruction and these keep the book moving very readably. Unfortunately his touch is less sure in the personal stories, which pad out his pilgrimage. The dialogue is often stilted and the first-person narrator, Aristes's pupil, Galen, is also the hero of a youthful love story with a Jewish girl of Antioch which chimes uneasily with the main theme. Aristes himself, seen through Galen's admiring and inquisitive eyes, is only intermittently convincing as an artist of genius.

Graham Shelley in *The Knights of Dark Renown* also deals with the meeting of east and west, although his east is no farther than the start

time a thousand years later. The crusader kingdom of Jerusalem came to an end in 1187 with the disastrous battle of the Horns of Hattin in which Saladin virtually annihilated the flower of the kingdom's knights and captured its king Guy of Lusignan. The events leading up to that disaster and the reasons for it, which lay more in the crusaders' own camp than in any deliberate strategy of Saladin's, Reynold of Châtillon, Ballan of Ibelin, Joscelin of Courtenay, Grand Masters of the Temple and the Hospital, princesses of Gallilee and Jerusalem, the very names are romance in themselves but the lives they led were all too often nasty, brutish and short, and the morals of these champions of the Holy Sepulchre based less on idealism than expediency.

Graham Shelley has done his homework, thoroughly, almost too thoroughly, perhaps, for there are times when this reads less like a novel than straight history, though history told with a dramatist's eye for a little setting and a novelist's insight into human minds and motives. In fact, as a novelist, Mr. Shelley is at his best with the *mean fiction*, the minor characters, most of them young but only very few of them fictional, who fill out the background to the grand events. But while he needs practice in marrying the truth and the imaginative elements in his story, he displays a passionate understanding of the human reality behind the exotic pageantry. He may one day become an historical novelist of some stature.

The latest volume in the "Bucher der Neunzehn" series of cheap editions is a collection of the *Mechanismen* of Arthur Schnitzler. It contains seven stories including *Leutnant Giesl*, *Casanova's Dream* and *Der blinde Gerontius*, and is excellent value at DM14.80 (15 sh. 6p.).

CHATTO & WINDUS

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Hamish Hamilton

Below decks

MICHEL BERNANOS: *The Other Side of the Mountain*. Translated by Elaine Halperin. 107 pp. Gollancz. 21s.

After only a few hours on board a French galleon bound for Peru, an eighteen-year-old cabin boy is keelhauled by the bullying crew. Only when he is under the hull and half drowned does the captain intervene and have him pulled back to safety. This small episode is the first taste of violence and inhumanity that steadily increase to murder, cannibalism and final disaster, the only survivors of which are the boy and the old ship's cook who has befriended him.

The next half of the novel describes the events up to the sinking of the galleon and the discovery of an island by the two survivors. The brutal degeneration of the men before privation and fear lays bare the affinity with a deeper nature, revolting and incomprehensible to the intellect, but shared in common with the rest of the natural world.

In the midst of physical suffering there are moments of insight that point to an underlying terrifying mystery. While under water during his keelhauled ordeal, the boy opens his eyes and sees the hull of the ship like "an enormous dark monster". After shooting a sailor in the head he dreams of a flower growing from the fatal wound and reaching out for him. It is to this world of nightmare hallucination that the survivors pass in the second half of the novel. From the nightmare of reality they enter into a world upside down, where their island surroundings are totally alien to their experience, where the earth is alive

and made of blood and men stand turned to stone in fear. The monster beneath the decks of the ship becomes the earth beneath their feet pulsating with a heartbeat; flowers and creepers reach out to devour them.

The story is told simply, without embellishment. Whether it is inter-

Back to bed

MAUREN DUFFY: *Wounds*. 192pp. Hutchinson. 25s.

Maureen Duffy handles detail so beautifully and can suggest what her characters see, imagine and remember with such precision and life that it is disappointing to find the larger implications of her novel so crude and uncertain by comparison. Short separated scenes follow some loosely connected characters through a typically frustrated unhappy period of their lives. A trades union official sees himself as no more than a competent, mindless arbitrator, who has lost a wife and is indirectly responsible for the accident which crippled his only daughter. An ageing lesbian dreams of flowers and conquests and is thrown out of a pub for singing. A Labour mayor sees his life's work reduced to the erection of a tasteful public lavatory. A dainty old lady juggles with memories to forget she is dying, glossing over humiliations and gliding small moments of glory.

Between these sad and rumbling scenes are others, which make a sequence and describe an afternoon spent in bed by a pair of unnamed

and somewhat generalized lovers. They make love, discuss their feelings for each other, their past affairs and their meeting and smoke those *post coitum* cigarettes. It is not clear whether the anxiety, the need for verbal assurances of love are meant to characterize these scenes as surely as they do. On the contrary, the sequence seems there to underline the emptiness of those other lives, to point out that sexual love is the only experience which is real and pure and healing. But Miss Duffy fails to give the balm reality by making her lovers so representative. The act of sex is not itself susceptible of infinite variation, and the overheard conversations of lovers in bed are not to be governed pretty firmly by the conventions of the mode.

Perhaps the difficulty is simply that a generalized compassion, a too simplified account of what is wrong with most people's lives, leaves out all those pleasures of perception and understanding which this author best at capturing. Her gifts lie in the area of split seconds of individual reality, and she has spoiled the effect of these with a smothering and irrefutable life view.

Well-heeled

FREDERICK LUNDBERG: *The Rich and the Super Rich*. Edited with an introduction by Peter Wilks. 504pp. Nelson. £3 10s.

This fat, small-printed, long-lined, eye-tiring book is by a Chicagoan journalist who some economic training who wrote *America's Dirty Families*. Despite a seventeen-page introduction for non-American readers by Mr. Peter Wilks, who also "edited" it (why, and how much?), the work is confined to the American scene, social and economic structure, constitutional and legal framework, and way of life. It contains a lot of valuable information without much "intelligence" in the military sense. A lot about rich American families, their members and their ramifying stockholdings but little about any influence by them upon day-to-day or long-term decision-making in corporations and industry. It is a badly written book, over-verbose, abusive, peppy, melodramatic. It is also very confused and confusing, for the author is so violently against the few families enriched by inheritance that the reader has a bad let-down sense while absorbing his derisive views about socialism and egalitarianism and about the incompetence, injustice and unreliability of politicians, as well as his contempt for Marxism. Mr. Charles Curran, reviewing it in *The Sunday Telegraph*, has aptly called it "a vast love-hate study of the American rich". Its author's style and method strongly suggest that he suffers from the prevalent American intellectual's disease of Americanophobia, worse than some British intellectuals' version of it. He describes the general American public as "handicapped people", lambasts the charitable and educational trusts rich Americans have set up (with such good results in disseminating knowledge and appreciation of the arts to the envy of poorer European cities and universities), and scorns the notion that there is "room at the top" since the inheriting families have cornered it. If it be an ordinary American citizen's notion of wealth today that it exceed the British equivalent of £1m.; if Mr. Lundberg be right:

Every fat-infested dum-b point Marxist do not note: his streets lined day and night with automobiles. . . . As between housing and cars, many people have clearly and childishly chosen cars.

It is the true, as *The Economist's* special supplement upon the United States on May 10, 1969, said on page 19, that the median family income for black Americans exceeds the average income of British families; well, most white and half the black Americans are materially well-off, millionaires are countable in tens of thousands, even in sterling's purchasing-power, and it is "the affluent society" the author should be attacking and more logical. Dr. Mishan did for the United Kingdom, not just the few favoured by inheritance.

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lance. Indeed in *The Times* of May 19 that doughty socialist financier Mr. Oliver Stutchbury, reviewing Mr. Lundberg's outburst, points out about the unequal distribution of wealth (capital, not income) in Britain that not even a socialist government in nearly five years of power has done anything much to change it. . . . And now, it seems that until the monstrous irrelevance of the 1965 Finance Act has washed through the system, no government can do anything about it.

Yet the only clear solution Mr. Lundberg offers is to weight voting according to education. One vote for each adult plus one more for grade-school finishers, three more for high-school graduates, and fifteen more for each college graduate! That wouldn't half put premiums on private education and the purchase thereof, and even further narrow and enrich the elite. It is as absurd as the present Government's persistence without solving for the author is so violently against the few families enriched by inheritance that the reader has a bad let-down sense while absorbing his derisive views about socialism and egalitarianism and about the incompetence, injustice and unreliability of politicians, as well as his contempt for Marxism. Mr. Charles Curran, reviewing it in *The Sunday Telegraph*, has aptly called it "a vast love-hate study of the American rich". Its author's style and method strongly suggest that he suffers from the prevalent American intellectual's disease of Americanophobia, worse than some British intellectuals' version of it. He describes the general American public as "handicapped people", lambasts the charitable and educational trusts rich Americans have set up (with such good results in disseminating knowledge and appreciation of the arts to the envy of poorer European cities and universities), and scorns the notion that there is "room at the top" since the inheriting families have cornered it. If it be an ordinary American citizen's notion of wealth today that it exceed the British equivalent of £1m.; if Mr. Lundberg be right:

Wealth, the personal variety, is indeed extremely unequally distributed: in the world, in African states, in communist states, in Continental Europe as well as in America and Britain. It was so in America in Toqueville's day (and earlier), and it is naturally more so today given the Anglo-Saxon, and Napoleonic, and Roman-Dutch inheritance laws. It is naturally most so in the economy most productive per worker and per unit of capital: the United States. It is less so—but less also are productivity and purchasing-power and standards of life per head—in communist states and in 50 per cent communist mixed-economies like our own, in which the public sector redistributes half the national income; but in which loud complaints are heard from all political parties that our private enterprise sector does not "grow" fast enough or turn out enough real wages for all. Marxists and socialists complain against a few rich and against all private profits, but expect private enterprise to turn out the goods. American authors complain about inequality of the distribution of wealth in America, but preserve discreet silence about how big a fall in American citizens' current consumption, saving and investment (and growth) would be the inescapable price of "rectification". The proof? Russia and all egalitarian, authoritarian states' systems and their growth. What was their growth in? And what precisely is their spectrum of wealth-distribution or purchasing-power gradient, in comparison with the American and British?

Despite much story-telling of an informative kind reminiscent of the phrase by a reviewer of a book on birds, "This book told me more about birds than I wanted to know". *The Rich and the Super Rich* is a shrill, unbalanced, unhelpful book.

History in the Sixth Form and in Higher Education (10pp. Historical Association. 3s. 6d.) contains the substance of two talks heard at a recent conference of history teachers in London. Professor Jiel Hurstfield discusses the teaching of history at university level and the qualifications he found in those coming up from the school; he ended by stating that a university has the right to require of students coming up to read history. Mr. Keith Dawson speaks about the present-day teaching of the subject in the sixth form.

Bringing girls in

R. R. DALE: *Mixed or Single-Sex School?* 272pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £3.
LYNN McDONALD: *Social Class and Delinquency*. 240pp. Faber and Faber. £2 15s.

For twenty years, with a bare minimum of official support, Reginald Dale has been investigating a vital educational question: should girls and boys go to school together or separately? Astonishingly, there is no other substantial research on this topic, here or abroad. In Europe and the United States, where coeducation is the norm, the information is perhaps less urgently needed, but in this country decisions which will shape the schooling of children not yet born must, in the absence of sound evidence, be guided by prejudice and tradition.

The line was laid down in a Ministry of Education pamphlet published in 1945, which asserted with typical vagueness:

It is in the secondary field that the rival advantages of separation make themselves most apparent. . . . At this stage boys and girls must be separated for physical education and major games, and there are other respects, too, in which their needs and interests will run rather apart. Where, therefore, numbers permit, the balance of advantage may be held to lie on the side of single-sex schools.

What Mr. Dale shows in *Mixed or Single-Sex School?*, all the more impressively for his meticulous care not to confuse research and opinion and the modesty with which he states his case, is that the balance of advantage lies very plainly on the other side. There is no doubt what teachers think. An overwhelming majority of the staffs of the coeducational schools in his survey preferred their own system: a majority of teachers in single-sex schools voted against their own system and preferred coeducation. The more experience they had of mixed schools, either as pupils or teachers, the more likely they were to favour coeducation. As one of them said, "A coeducational school is the best preparation for a coeducational world".

The pupils' verdict was just as clear. They preferred the atmosphere in mixed schools, found the teachers friendlier and more helpful, the discipline less oppressive. A substantial

minority complained about over-strictness in single-sex schools. Corporal punishment was the main grievance among the boys: "Every teacher had his own weapon." Girls suffered from a multitude of petty restrictions: "There were so many rules not a day went by without us all being punished for breaking one of them." Taken together the comments reveal the old-established grammar schools fighting a hopeless rearguard action against the teenage subculture. You aren't allowed to talk to boys. You mustn't work in Woolworths. Hair must be short and skirts long, and make-up is forbidden. One boy wrote bitterly, "A general aura of hate surrounded each member of the staff", and though his view was not a typical one we have to remember that this survey was carried out among the most docile and conforming group of grammar school ex-pupils—those who had stayed the course and obtained places in Colleges of Education. If Mr. Dale had questioned boys and girls who failed the eleven plus or dropped out of grammar school at fifteen he might have had some even stronger reactions.

Though he went out of his way to seek out and quote hostile opinions on mixed schooling, Mr. Dale found such opposition as there was concentrated in only one group of schools—those which had recently turned coeducational. Both staff and pupils tended to complain about laxity of discipline; curiously enough, some girls also said their women teachers had become more sarcastic and "vindictive" when the school began to admit boys. Possibly this reflects the difficulties of women teachers confronted for the first time with adolescent boys, together with the unsettling effect of suddenly introducing the opposite sex into a previously segregated school. Mr. Dale considers it a strong argument against the practice in some education authorities of having two single-sex junior high schools to feed a coeducational senior high school. Far better, he feels, to let boys and girls grow up together in school, and thus accept coeducation as a normal part of life.

Clearly for policymakers and educational debaters this is a very important book. Not one to read straight through, but invaluable for reference and a mine of illustrative quotations, even if Mr. Dale is somewhat inclined to introduce the most ordinary remark

with a fanfare of trumpets. The ringing-up of detached comments does indeed become monotonous, and the weakness of exclusive use of written questionnaire method, I doubt limited funds dictated approach, but one longs for just a few consecutive accounts from students who had experienced school of both kinds—half-a-dozen would have been enough.

Mr. Dale's book, two more volumes are to follow—is the culmination of many years' patient research. Lynn McDonald's by contrast is a lightning effort, but a most promising one. Her disrespect for authority, willingness to cut through the platitudes and say what she thinks, her awareness that research and fact collecting are not the same thing, make a welcome change from the stolid conformity of most published Ph.D. theses.

The major finding in *Social Class and Delinquency* is unsurprisingly contrary to some American studies admitted delinquency in this country is highly correlated with social class. (The correlation is even higher if course if delinquency is measured in juvenile court appearances.) But effects of class are reinforced as intensified at every turn by the school system. Secondary modern school boys are more delinquent than those at grammar schools; C-streamers admit more offences than A-streamers. Failure at school, irrespective of intelligence, is a strong predisposing factor to delinquency. Dr. McDonald's prescription for reducing delinquency is a sweeping reform of the education system.

The coeducation approach, as offered by the probation service, does a more than linker with the symptom. We must get rid of selection, streaming and the assumption by so many teachers that the average child is "dim" if not ineducable. She puts out that in the United States, all its faults, poor academic achievement is seen as a highly undesirable and unnecessary result of certain conditions of American life. All that is required is "more knowledge, and effort". Here, achievement is accepted as a fact of life.

In a very comprehensive catalogue of the reform she does not suggest—and on Mr. Dale's evidence it might have a marked effect on the incidence of delinquency—is to throw open the doors of all those boys' schools and let the girls in to civilize them

As they liked it

JOSEPH G. PRICE: *The Unfortunate Comedy*. 197pp. Liverpool University Press. £2 10s.
DENNIS BARTHOLOMEUS: *Macbeth and the Players*. 302pp. Cambridge University Press. £3 5s.
JOHN WAIN (Editor): *Shakespeare: "Macbeth"*. 300pp. Macmillan. £2. (Paperback, 15s.)
PETER URE (Editor): *Shakespeare: "Julius Caesar"*. 264pp. Macmillan. 35s. (Paperback, 12s. 6d.)

The interpretation of Shakespeare's plays through their stage history may in the end tell us less about Shakespeare's plays than about their actors and audiences. At best, an account of a stage performance, however accurately observed, is a poor substitute for the theatrical experience itself; and at worst, we may be left with little more than a record of the vagaries of taste and fashion through successive generations. Much depends on the popularity of the play itself, and on the genius of its stage interpreters and their contemporary chroniclers.

In these respects Mr. Price is at a disadvantage, for he has to report that "no really satisfactory production of *Alf's Well* has yet been accomplished in a major theatre" in judgment which might perhaps have been qualified if his book had not gone to press before the Royal Shakespeare Company's successful production in 1967. His account of the play's theatrical fortunes, or misfortunes, is therefore instructive in a rather negative sense. Since the eighteenth century, there are no records of a production before 1741. *Alf's Well* has been treated in turn as farce, sentimental comedy, melodrama, and realistic problem-play.

If this stage history is more than a footnote to the changes in English

culture, it chiefly suggests the difficulty of determining what kind of play *Alf's Well* is. But when Mr. Price returns to Shakespeare's text at the end of his book, he hardly resolves this difficulty by advising future directors of the play to accept each seemingly diverse element "in the belief that 'the adoption of a single approach to the play may be more damaging than critical resignation to this lack'". As "A Defence of *Alf's Well*", the scene-by-scene analysis in this final chapter is rather laboured, and Mr. Price's failure to make either his information or his commentary yield much of new significance for interpretation is reflected in the lameness of his conclusion that "Alf's Well that Ends Well is a very human play".

Mr. Bartholomeus's study of the

Autumn

All week the leaves have been picked for a fall, waiting on a breeze. Sickly yellow, they feed off rained sap.

The season is closing in on us. At dusk the fog rolls in across damp pasture-land; somewhere a hunting owl shrieks and strikes down through it, talons-sunking.

Frigning sleep, you put the weight of four blankets between yourself and those murderous eyes. Outside the door, I leap a match beneath my cigarette and peer into the grey blankness where the owl floats. There is no sign of that malevolence. As the flame touches, the small shards of tobacco fuse, with a soft hiss.

DAVID HIRSHFELD

Laws of love

MARK ROSE: *Heroic Love*. 156pp. Harvard University Press. £2 5s. 6d.

Conditioning in the nursery has given the fairy-tale conclusion "they were married and lived happily ever after" the air of a law of life. Folk-magic may know its origin. It is so familiar and so satisfactory to the Anglo-Saxon Protestant mind that it has not been thought worth while to dwell upon its appearance in the literary tradition of the Renaissance, or to note with much curiosity how *The Faerie Queene* and the *Arcadian* alike depend upon it, to harmonize the conflicting claims of passion and heroic virtue. This reveals perhaps an unacknowledged tendency to treat these epic works as basically no more than fairy-tales. Mark Rose's thesis in *Heroic Love* is that Sidney and Spenser love leading to marriage is heroic virtue, and thus earns a place in serious literature.

In so far as heroes and heroines are exemplary, reason in them must guide and temper passion. Love would seem to cut across this ideal pattern, as a powerful and disrupting force. Neither author fails to show its power, nor to deny that it disrupts, but both of them justify it by showing how it may end in chaste marriage and noble offspring. *Outside courts* accept passion, sublimation, and neo-platonism; *inside* mutes it. English writers, under all the trappings of romance, have a more homely, sensible way out of the dilemma.

It is questionable whether for Spenser it ever reaches the proportions of a dilemma. For him there is a good love and a bad love and he has no doubt which is which. He is so certain of his own distinctions that he can use almost identical phrases to describe the two. In the first *Arcadian*, love was more passionately deviant.

A solution as single-minded as the one Mr. Rose propounds can only partially explain works which are so complex and various. It is not new, but it is central, and however much one may disagree with particular applications, it is a pleasure to see it pressed home with such clarity, force and consistency. *The Faerie Queene* and *Arcadian* are the two great English Renaissance love poems, and this book is a most welcome and competent study of them.

Golden age

F. P. WILSON: *The English Drama 1485-1585*. Edited by G. K. Hunter. 244pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. 27s. 6d.

Marlowe's contemptuous backward reference to the "giggling vein of rhyming mother-wits" and his proud promise of future "high-astounding terms" boldly and emphatically attest to the sudden change in English drama which came during the late 1580s. The new movement, as we are well aware, produced a theatrical wonder which made Elizabethan London vie with ancient Athens, and towards this wonder our attention tends, constantly to be attracted yet increasingly we are being made aware that true consideration of the work of Shakespeare and his contemporaries involves a valid and balanced assessment of what had been accomplished in earlier Tudor times. Such an assessment, however, is not always easy to arrive at: for its formulation demands that a critic-historian be equipped with a wide knowledge of remembrance drama in general, with keen perceptiveness, an ability to look upon the older plays in a fresh manner, and alert judgment. The excellence of *English Drama 1485-1585* depends on the fact that F. P. Wilson was peculiarly possessed of all these qualities, while in addition being gifted with the power of mastering and moulding large bodies of often scattered documentary material. What he had to say, both about individual dramatic efforts and about general trends, has, therefore, prime significance.

Although his comments on particular plays constantly exhibit sympathetic interest and sensitive understanding, he is wise enough to admit that some of the dramas which have come down to us from these years are surprisingly and disappointingly mediocre. After an appreciative examination of the very first, late works up to and including John Heywood's lively contributions, he thus pauses to present a general reflection which, he confesses, must prove a "cooling card" for English drama.

Wilson's study is a most welcome and competent study of them. It is a pleasure to see it pressed home with such clarity, force and consistency. *The Faerie Queene* and *Arcadian* are the two great English Renaissance love poems, and this book is a most welcome and competent study of them.

of the diffuse moralities, we must go to Scotland. And even when he comes to later works he shows himself well aware that, in comedy if not in tragedy, several Italian authors had succeeded in writing plays the structure and dialogue of which must make most of ours seem jejune and uninteresting. Obviously, allowance has to be made for the loss of countless scripts: some tantalizingly known to us by their titles alone, others irretrievably lost without even so slight a trace. If we had possessed these, he admits, "the gap between Greene and the young Shakespeare and their predecessors might not seem so striking"; yet here too, he is forced to admit that the intrinsic merit of what has survived is slight.

While no attempt is made to suggest a formal explanation of the forces which prevented the drama before 1585 from reaching a masterly power, it seems clear that Wilson believed the basic cause to rest in the dramatists' failure to discover a truly effective form of expression for stage use. True, he does make the interesting statement that "a fact by no means irrelevant to the development of English drama is the dependence of much Italian comedy on the novellieri"—a comment which applies to plot and theme rather than to style; but in general his stress seems to be placed mainly upon dialogue rather than upon action. His chapter on the late Tudor morality play closes with an independent section devoted to a discussion of metre and rhetoric, and throughout the volume almost all his analyses of individual works include acute reflections on the language galactic used for the dialogue. This is not novel, but Wilson's constant attention to the authors' speech styles gives a central theme to his historical survey.

The survey itself must be greeted with mixed feelings: its very excellence, its scholarly exactitude, its wise consideration of the separate plays and its skilful placing of them within a larger context remind one of the best of modern literary criticism. Yet it is a pity that the book is so long, and that it is so expensive. It is a pity that it is so long, and that it is so expensive. It is a pity that it is so long, and that it is so expensive.

Augustus M. Kelley
in
Great Britain

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her crew are cast in excessively heroic moulds and the account of the land fighting is impossible to follow in the complete absence of maps. It is still a readable story but not as significant as Mr. Hoyt claims.

MICHAEL BARROWS, *A Book of Country Things*, 175pp. Wyndham and Stacey, £2.

The country things are American and the trappings those of a bygone way of life. This elegantly produced book, with its abundance of pen-and-ink sketches in text and margins, records in a countryman's simple language what he has heard from his grandfather of the life, occupations and crafts of those who inhabited the log cabins in the pioneering days of the early nineteenth century.

OWEN, A. E. B. (ed.), *The Records of the Commissioners of Sewers in the Parts of Holland, 1547-1601*, Vol. II, 199pp. Lincoln Record Society, £3.

Fenland drainage activities under the Tudors are illustrated by the surviving records of the Holland County of Sewers, the publication of which the Lincoln Record Society resumes, after a lapse of some years, in this second volume. Mr. Owen, of the Cambridge University Library, who succeeds the late Miss Kirkby as editor, describes his treatment of these records in an introduction, and provides full indexes.

Transactions of the *Thorton Society*, Vol. 71, 100pp. Nottingham: Derby and Sons for the Society.

The first of thirteen papers on Nottinghamshire history and archaeology lists and describes the objects found in a Roman well recently investigated in a parish south of Nottingham. The late Sir John Stenton's memoir of whom appears in this issue writes about the foundation of Southwell minster, the recorded history of which begins with a charter of King Ludwig in A.D. 956. Other contributions are concerned with education in the age of apprenticeship, Thorton's animal illustrations, and local parks during the past two centuries.

Journalism

MORGAN, DWYD and PERRY, MICHAEL, *The Printed Word*, 133pp. Epworth Press and N.P.C., £5.

These two authors, each with experience of journalism, consider for the benefit of the clergy and their people such things as parish magazines, advertising and the like. The book, which is sympathetic and sensible, ought to be widely read, but, alas, there seems to be no way of teaching some people to make what they write

readable, and the magazines are likely to remain what they were.

Librarianship

BAKSWELL, K. G. B., *Industrial Libraries throughout the World*, 184pp. Pergamon Press, £2 16s.

Volume II of the International Series of Monographs in Library and Information Science preaches the value of industrial libraries as aids to productivity, surveys the provision of such services as they exist today in Britain, Ireland and many overseas countries and ends with a chapter on the management of the industrial library. The author is Lecturer in Librarianship, City of Liverpool College of Commerce.

Natural History

TESSIER, HENRY, *Wild Hares*, 107pp. John Baker, 30s.

A nicely judged mixture of information, reminiscence, and reflection, written as are so many of the better animal studies by a field sportsman. Highly-strung creatures that do not make the best of pets, hares have some pleasantly eccentric ways, including an inclination to congregate in and around fields, possibly drawn by the din which is believed to please them. Like all Mr. Tessier's writing this book offers learning lightly worn, much of it acquired by personal experience.

Naval Studies

TRIGGSING, K. G., *Home Port Singapore*, 33pp. Oxford University Press for the Straits Steamship Co., £4 5d.

The author was formerly Raffles Professor of History in the University of Singapore. This is the history of the Straits Steamship Company and of the port with which it has been so closely associated since its beginning in 1840. Much of the story concerns the disastrous events of the Second World War and the subsequent changes which faced the Company with even more threatening problems than those of the war.

Railways

HOOPER, K., *North-East England*, 110pp. David and Charles, £2 2s.

This is in the nature of a companion volume to Mr. Hooper's history, his selection covers most aspects of the Iron Way in the region (where railways began) and shows how the North-Eastern Railway, the largest company, served coal, steel, agriculture, the ports, seaside towns and the ordinary traveller. It is illustrated by some shots of bridges, railway buses and railway people.

Science

SNOW, C. P., *The Two Cultures: and a Second Look*, 108pp. Cambridge University Press, 12s. (Paperback, 6s).

Lord Snow's famous Rede Lecture, which said something that millions were obviously longing to say all over the world, was published in 1959 and republished in 1964 with the addition of a second part. The two parts, now issued in a paperback edition, have lost none of their relevance over the years.

YOUNG, J. Z. and MARGARESON, TOM (Editors), *From Molecule to Man*, 215pp. Thames and Hudson, £6 6s.

Only a few years ago, any work of biology for a general audience tended to be not so much a synopsis of more scholarly work, but a series of watered-down excerpts from them. Times have changed, and this is largely because it is now possible to explain so many more biological processes in terms of physics and chemistry, which lend themselves to generalization and hence to a more unified account. The character of *From Molecule to Man* reflects this revolution. Its pages are large (twelve-inch octavo), but the unusually well-edited and concise text is a masterpiece of clear exposition. This is no coffee-table book in the derogatory sense, and anyone prepared to read it carefully will find in the end something of a biologist. Falling into eight independent sections, each by an expert in his subject, it ranges from the non-living molecule to the living, from cell to man, from virus to cancer, and from the behaviour of the individual to that of the species. The diagrams are clear and attractively drawn, and the photographs—especially those in colour—are often intrinsically very beautiful and always relevant. The only regret is that this is unlikely to be adopted as a textbook in our schools where the recent revolution in publishing methods is little heeded, and where survival of the cheapest is law.

HURST, R. (Editor), *Scientific Thought 1900-1960*, 277pp. Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, £3 5s. (Paperback, £1 15s.)

Scientific Thought 1900-1960 is cast in a somewhat conventional mould, although the idea of asking scientists to survey the histories of their subjects is perhaps less common than it was. Thirteen essays are included which, according to the editor, are intended for other scientists who might want to get an idea of the broad sweep of progress of ideas in scientific subjects in fields remote from their own. Excessive optimism is a

pardenable vice. Few scientists remote from mathematical logic are likely to comprehend much in the two short essays on logic, and regrettable as it may be, mathematical physicists tend to be bored by the life sciences. But the essays are also aimed at those common men who will take the trouble to read them; and there, paradoxically, they are likely to be more successful. Such essays as Sir George Thomson's "Matter and Radiation" and Professor E. B. Ford's "Ecological Genetics", which outline a good deal on similar themes by professional historians of science, are likely to appeal to those who are not professionally committed to the subject. "I was there" will always count for a good deal.

The essays hang together tolerably well, as it happens, largely because biological topics predominate. Medicine is found no place, and astronomy enters only through a (very good) account of cosmology, by Professor C. W. Kilminster. Speaking generally, thought takes precedence over deed, concept over application. "The progress of science comes about more from the application and testing-out of new ideas than from the discovery of new facts." Perhaps it is a little unfair to quote the book-jacket, but there is more than a suspicion that in this sentence lies the philosophy beneath the book. If so, it is a philosophy which does not obtrude.

Social Studies

MUNCKTON, H. A., *A History of the English Public House*, 175pp. Bodley Head, 30s.

The Saxon king Edgar complained that there were too many alehouses, and decreed a limitation of them. From that starting-point this history accumulates information about the evolution of the English pub in the course of 1,000 years. There is a preliminary salute to the pub as a companionable social centre but the author's main interest lies in the organizational and business aspects of his subject. We are not bidden to the Mermaid or the Cheshire Cheese, but can learn a good deal about the early regulation of the alehouses, the origins of the beer duty, the nation's changing habits in drinking, and the organization of the licensed trade in modern times.

RODGERS, BRIAN, *The Battle Against Poverty*, Volume 2: *Towards a Welfare State*, 83pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 16s. (Paperback, 8s.)

Mr. Rodgers's book continues the social and historical account of Britain's attempts to overcome poverty and covers the period from the First

World War onwards. It is a thing too densely packed with particularly of the desperate, lasting changes of the 19th century so much ground in a space is an achievement; but a danger that students new to the subject will find some parts of the volume indigestible. However, the final chapter, very today are essential to the virtue of their outstanding.

TURNER, CHRISTOPHER, *For Kinship in Modern Britain*, Routledge and Kegan Paul (Paperback, 8s.).

A useful addition to an unceasing summary of the post-war literature on the family does a job of mapping the field. I will appreciate Dr. Turner's notion of British kinship and kinship classifications as his remarkably clear demonstration of how family trees are cut and set out.

Travel

LEA, JON A., *Pakistan in 60 Days*, New York: Sterling, 17s. 6d.

Jon Lea's book is a book which such books should be hundred or so photographs fully chosen and well presented, rather than a travelogue and break up a plain, and very perceptive text. It is primarily designed for readers who are not going to visit, but to give them a little of the feel of the country, the people, the land, its history, its people, and its economy, chapter being admirably illustrated. Perhaps the book is a little too much for its title, although the text was written for the first time in 1960, and the resignation of President Ayub Khan hardly a word new to the reader. The book is a good one, and the many pictures have been perplexed by the recent troubles will find it a remarkably complete explanation of the situation, which President Yahya Khan's martial law ultimately represents the only possible dies.

THE UNIVERSITY OF WALES, ABERYSTWYTH LIBRARY. Applications are invited from qualified persons for the post of Assistant Librarian. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the library, and will be expected to maintain a high standard of service to the community. The salary is £1,200 per annum, plus pension. Applications should be sent to the Librarian, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, by 1st July 1969.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLACKPOOL. LIBRARIES DEPARTMENT. Applications are invited from qualified persons for the post of Assistant Librarian. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the library, and will be expected to maintain a high standard of service to the community. The salary is £1,200 per annum, plus pension. Applications should be sent to the Librarian, County Borough of Blackpool, by 1st July 1969.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE EDUCATION COMMITTEE. COUNTY LIBRARY. Applications are invited from qualified persons for the post of Assistant Librarian. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the library, and will be expected to maintain a high standard of service to the community. The salary is £1,200 per annum, plus pension. Applications should be sent to the Librarian, Buckinghamshire Education Committee, by 1st July 1969.

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL. Applications are invited from qualified persons for the post of Assistant Librarian. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the library, and will be expected to maintain a high standard of service to the community. The salary is £1,200 per annum, plus pension. Applications should be sent to the Librarian, Essex County Council, by 1st July 1969.

BEDFORDSHIRE. Applications are invited from qualified persons for the post of Assistant Librarian. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the library, and will be expected to maintain a high standard of service to the community. The salary is £1,200 per annum, plus pension. Applications should be sent to the Librarian, Bedfordshire, by 1st July 1969.

ASSISTANT ARCHIVIST. For County Record Office which has recently moved to new premises in the County Hall. Salary within scale £1,035-£1,265 per annum. Pension and sick pay schemes. Applications stating age, education, qualifications and experience, together with the names of two referees, should be sent to the Librarian, County Record Office, 10, Bedford Square, London, W.C.1. Closing date 1st July 1969.

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VACANT APPOINTMENTS AND PUBLIC NOTICES, &c.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF WEST BROMWICH LENDING LIBRARY

Applications are invited from Chartered Librarians for the post of LENDING LIBRARIAN. On Grade A.P.4, £1,485-£1,715 per annum. This important post, which involves responsibility for book selection, staff control and a readers advisory service, offers considerable scope for a person with initiative and ideas. Applications stating full details, together with the names of two referees, to the Town Clerk, Town Hall, West Bromwich, Staffs, not later than 14th July, 1969.

County of Northumberland County Library REGIONAL LIBRARIAN

Applications are invited from qualified persons for the post of Regional Librarian. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the library, and will be expected to maintain a high standard of service to the community. The salary is £1,200 per annum, plus pension. Applications should be sent to the Librarian, County of Northumberland, by 1st July 1969.

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VACANT APPOINTMENTS AND PUBLIC NOTICES, &c.

Librarian

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